

DRAFT – PSSC FO 2008 OHMVR GRANTS

2008 Border Mountain Planning Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC FO) manages 1,500 miles of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) routes on over 1.65 million acres. This grant application seeks funding to produce a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) for public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Border Mountains region of San Diego County. The Border Mountains area encompasses approximately 60,000 acres of public land generally located along the international border with Mexico in southern San Diego County, east of Otay Mesa, south of Interstate Highway 8, and west of the California Desert Conservation Area boundary. This type of plan represents the most detailed level of planning for BLM lands. The South Coast Resource Management Plan established broad goals and objectives, including the designation of the Border Mountains as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). BLM is currently completing a travel management plan for the area to determine which routes would be open to OHV use. A Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) will further address all aspects of recreational use, including OHV, in this highly sensitive area.

Due to expanding urbanization on private lands, the BLM managed lands are becoming increasingly important to the public and local governments. The public lands are a source of open space that supports biodiversity and habitat for threatened and endangered species. Open space also provides much needed recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors. San Diego County has a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) covering approximately the western third of the Border Mountains Area, including the largest block of public land in the planning area, Otay Mountain Wilderness. The MSCP plan guides management of habitat and recreational resources on private, county, and state lands, and BLM has agreed to cooperate in meeting preservation goals of the MSCP on public lands. In addition to impacts from undirected OHV activity, the area is influenced by border security and immigration enforcement and the high occurrence of wildfires.

The following would be objectives of the RAMP document:

- Provide OHV recreation a set of designated routes while sustaining habitat and open space values.
- Plan for facilities such as parking areas, trailheads, and kiosks.
- Provide information to the public on recreational opportunities in the area.
- Manage activities associated with OHV use such as camping, hunting, shooting and non-motorized trails.
- Minimize conflicts between recreation, administrative, fire, and border security uses.
- Pursue acquisition of title and easements where necessary.
- Identify maintenance needs for the designated route network.

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How Plan relates to sustaining OHV Recreational/Opportunity:

Informational materials and facilities designs would be key components of the RAMP. These products would sustain OHV recreation in the Border Mountains by facilitating and encouraging responsible OHV use. Identifying areas suitable for other recreational pursuits associated with OHV use would sustain a spectrum of recreational opportunities. Acquisition of lands or easements would establish legal OHV access to public lands, ensuring that increased development does not close recreational opportunities. Coordination with Border Patrol, CALFIRE, and the Cleveland National Forest would ensure administrative and public access needs are met, and conflicts between recreation and other uses are minimized. Planning for maintenance of the designated routes will keep users off closed routes, and avoid further use restrictions.

List of Documents:

The South Coast Resource Management Plan

This grant will produce the following documents:

- Border Mountains Recreation Area Management Plan
- Environmental Assessment analyzing impacts of the RAMP
- Border Mountains Recreational Use Summary
- Detailed RAMP implementation schedule, including costs and potential funding sources
- Public use guide to the Border Mountains, including a map

Anticipated Timeline:

| Time | Description |
|-------------|--|
| Fall 2008 | Planning Begins, and will be completed by the end of 2009. Begin conducting local government agencies meetings implement public scoping programs |
| Spring 2009 | Conduct field studies and collect inventories and site assessments |
| Fall 2009 | Documents compiled and completed |

This planning project will provide the information necessary in order to implement the long-term goals of conservation and development in a manner that is consistent with sustainable OHV recreation. Without undergoing planning and future implementation, unresolved issues and conflicts may result in temporary closure of OHV activity in the Border Mountain Area.